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Contents

Source Materials and Some Problems of the Local Historian, with Special Reference to Washtenaw County, by Louis W. Doll
Books: Their Production and Distribution in Ann Arbor, by George Wahr Sallade

SOURCE MATERIALS AND SOME PROBLEMS OF THE LOCAL HISTORIAN, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WASHTENAW COUNTY

By 2nd Lt. Louis W. Doll,
General Service Assistant, University Library,
Stationed in Ann Arbor as student in the M. I. Japanese School,
United States Army

American local history is today in about the same situation that English local history was in the late 17th century. It was just about that time when scholars in England began to concern themselves with the careful study of these materials. The problems facing them were the same as those facing the student of American local history today: the difficulties as well as joys of an almost untouched field; the joy of searching, and uncovering, and studying, and synthesizing in fields where little or nothing has as yet been done.

In the widest meaning, history consists of everything that man has said, thought, and done. In a narrower sense, it is the remaining record of what man has said, thought, and done. But in any case, it is all-inclusive; it does not limit itself to the doings of kings or presidents or politicians. It concerns itself also with the everyday doings of all of us.

It is precisely those common, everyday things that are most easily lost; they are so ordinary and so well known that no one bothers to record them. We would give a great deal to know something about the everyday life and thought of people in the middle ages, but a great veil conceals those things from us.

Local history is very likely to be misunderstood. Usually there is little dramatic about it; and it is very common to find the attitude that local history is not worthy of study or interest. But today increasing emphasis is being placed on economic and social history, for those are of closest concern to us. The importance of a close study of local history will become evident in

a later portion of this paper, where suggested subjects for research will be given. We would certainly know a lot more abiut national and state history if we knew what an average community thought about and how it reacted to national and state affairs, for after all the United States is a democracy, and citizens do have influence, and public opinion is of very great importance.

Washtenaw County is rather fortunate in its printed materials. There is of course Chapman & Co.'s History of Washtenaw County, published in 1881. This big work is quite well done, much more so than others of that same kind, but it is far from complete; and of course the County has had a very interesting history since 1881. In 1891 appeared a Portrait and Biographical Album of Washtenaw County. And in 1906, Samuel W. Beakes assembled a similar volume called Past and Present of Washtenaw County, Michigan.* Ypsilanti has been admirably treated in Harvey C. Colburn's The Story of Ypsilanti, prepared in connection with the centennial celebration of the founding of that city, in 1923. As far as Ann Arbor is concerned, O. W. Stephenson's Ann Arbor the First Hundred Years (1927) is a valuable book. It is however marred by many inaccuracies and must be used with caution. This is partly due to the fact that the time allotted for doing the work was insufficient. Also, the detailed history of Ann Arbor cannot now be compassed in the confines of a single volume. As evidence of this, two subjects occupying four pages each in Stephenson's book have been expanded to book size: Arthur Lyon Cross' A History of St. Andrew's Church (1906) and Louis W. Doll's The History of St. Thomas Parish, Ann Arbor (1941). Thirteen pages in Stephenson's book on Ann Arbor publications have also been expanded in an unpublished manuscript by Louis W. Doll, "History of the Newspapers of Ann Arbor," which is deposited in the Michigan Historical Collections of the University of Michigan. A highly satisfactory history of the University was written by Wilfred B. Shaw in 1934; and this is now being tremendously expanded in an Encyclopedic Survey, published by the University, projected in 9 parts, 4 of which have already appeared (1941-43). An excellent history of the Michigan State Normal College, at Ypsilanti, was prepared by Daniel Putnam in 1899, a task which obviously is much in need of being brought up to date. Two atlases of Washtenaw County have been published, in 1874 and 1915. This brief list does not exhaust the published material. There

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*This book has been indexed by Louis S. White, of Ypsilanti.

are numerous shorter accounts of special subjects in pamphlet or small book size.* Among published materials must also be included newspapers; periodicals, such as Michigan History Magazine and Michigan Pioneer Collections; and various county and city directories.

The vast bulk of historical material relating to Washtenaw County is, however, still unpublished. Much of this is to be found in such repositories as the Michigan Historical Collections of the University of Michigan, the Burton Historical Collections in Detroit, and even in the National Archives at Washington. Township, city, village, county, state, and national offices of all kinds may provide materials for local history. The records of county clerk, treasurer, register of deeds, and probate judge,- all form valuable source materials. No center where a record of anything has been kept should be considered absurd as a source of information. Such things as maps, handbills, letters, day-books, diaries, account books are likely to be found anywhere, oftentimes in attics under the classification "junk."

Only within the last few years has the importance of historical materials been recognized to the extent of organized attempts for preservation in archives, such as the Burton Historical Collections and the University's Michigan Historical Collections. Only in depositories like these can such materials be properly preserved. Many people are reluctant to part with family papers and keepsakes, but the hazards which threaten these perishable treasures in the home are manifold: loss through fire, destruction by mice, misdirected patriotic contribution to paper drives, and, chief among them probably, the tendency to clean house and throw out everything that appears to be useless. People who have papers or other materials of historical importance would do well to store them in such a depository as the Michigan Historical Collections of the University; those who do not wish to part with them during their own lifetime should make provision, in wills or otherwise, to leave these materials to some such depository after their death.

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*Bethlehem Evangical Church, Ann Arbor. Centennial Program. 1935
Goodrich, E.P. A Hundred Years of the First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor. 1926
Groves, Wm. T. Site of the Rackham Graduate School, ms. 1935
Hoad, Wm. C. The Presbyterian Plan, Plant, and Program at Ann Arbor. 1938
The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority. Annual Reports
Pierce, Mrs. H.N. A Brief History of the Ladies' Decoration Society, ms. 1878
Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, Scio, Michigan. Centennial Program. 1933
Scheel, Wm. I. A Brief Historical Sketch of St. John's Lutheran Church, Northfield. 1932
Schepeler-Van Der Werker, Nettie Idell. History of Earliest Ann Arbor. 1919?
Smith, Mrs. Flora E. Early Days in Dexter. 1941
Smithe, George C. Glimpses of Places, People, and Things, Ypsilanti, 1887
Snidecor, Mrs. Minnie. History of the W.C.T.U. in Ypsilanti. 1935 ms

In order to emphasize the importance of working up more data than we have in hand on Washtenaw County, the following examples are offered of some important unfinished problems confronting the local historian.

Washtenaw County, in the seventies and eighties of the last century, was a great wheat and apple producing country. It is not so today. As far as wheat is concerned, there are no doubt fields more fertile for the purpose than those in Washtenaw. But why do inferior western apples undersell our own good firm Michigan apples on our own local markets? Perhaps it is due to the cooperative markets of the west. If so, it would seem to be the result of the refusal of local growers to form any kind of combination.

No one has yet written a comprehensive history of the interurban railways. It was the electric interurban rather than the automobile that revolutionized our civilization, creating the modern large city and preponderant urbanization. The phenomenon of the interurban, rising to a peak from its very beginning and collapsing, all during the lifetime of men now living, is of very great interest and importance, well worthy of study.

Any town or small village in Washtenaw is worthy of extensive study, from its origin to the present day. In connection with Chelsea, the rise and fall of Frank P. Glazier are not only of interest but of tremendous social importance. His factory and his economic and political manipulations are of great significance to the study and understanding of fundamental issues of politics and labor relations.

Two streams of immigration came into Washtenaw, one <u>via</u> the Erie Canal, Detroit River, Detroit, and westward; the other south of Lake Erie, through Toledo and up the River Raisin. The settlements in Manchester, the Raisin River settlements, and the Detroit-Ann Arbor-Huron Valley currents are worthy of study in this light. One such specialized study is already well done: W. W. Florer's <u>Early Michigan Settlements</u>, v.1, Washtenaw, Westphalia, Frankenmuth, Detroit, 1848. 1901. The influence of the Erie Canal on settlement in Washtenaw County would be an interesting topic.

The prohibition movement has had no adequate treatment on any basis, state or federal. A good history of prohibition throughout Washtenaw County could well be made the basic work as a microcosm of the entire movement in the United States.

As a closing note, it seems worth while to reiterate that most people misunderstand or underestimate the importance of local history in the scheme of historical studies, and that in the interpretation of social and economic roots, local history is of basic importance. The idea is here offered that local history, instead of concerning itself with persons and personal achievements, should be rather a study of trends on a small scale, the basic social and historical roots of larger and more general problems.

Ann Arbor, Michigan
November 24, 1944

BOOKS: THEIR PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION IN ANN ARBOR

By George Wahr Sallade
of Wahr's Book Stores

It is well understood by members of the Washtenaw Historical Society that local history is one of the best clues to the conditions of the country as a whole. There is no better mirror of the cultural status of an area than the presence of book outlets, whether they be in the form of libraries or commercial establishments. Books themselves go a long way toward depicting this status, more accurately perhaps than anything else, not only through the medium of their own pages but in the record of types purchased and read in a given section.

A definition of terms will make my discussion clearer. By distribution of books I mean their sale through established commercial enterprises, not their circulation through libraries, department stores, drug stores, or by mail subscription. By publication I refer to the assumption by an individual or combination of individuals of the responsibility for the manufacture and sale of any manuscript submitted by an author, excluding newspapers, periodicals, printing press establishments, and binderies.

For source material I have depended upon hear-say or memory, newspaper advertisements, old city directories, and early business records in my grandfather's store. Some of these are unfortunately sketchy and perhaps not too reliable. There are many gaps, and really the entire story, complete and accurate, is yet to be written.

Distribution. From all available accounts, I would put the establishment of the first Ann Arbor book store, at least the first Ann Arbor book seller, in the year 1832. On November 6 of that year one George Corselius, editor of the Western Emigrant, then Ann Arbor's one paper, advertised that he had received a shipment of books for sale. It can be assumed that at this time the book business was probably carried on in Mr. Corselius' newspaper offices. Later more detailed advertisements evidence Corselius' growing concern with the book side of his activities, so that we are justified in calling him the city's first real bookseller.

On May 7, 1837, Corselius was joined by E. P. Dwight, opening a book store selling school books, religious, political, and miscellaneous works. Around 1842, or maybe earlier, judging from an advertisement in the August 10, 1842, issue of the Democratic Herald, J. Lamb announced that he too was in the school book business. In 1846 there is a record of Perry's Book Store, while the Washtenaw Whig of December 24, 1851, gave notice of the establishment of another new store kept by G. D. Brown. One of my unconfirmed sources shows a Parker's Book Store of 1850 vintage, perhaps located where Wahr's downtown store is now. Standard works on history, science, and religion were the offerings of an advertised store, H. P. Dodge & Co., on January 1, 1854. C. T. Wilmot, J. F. Miller, and N. M. Schoff bought out the A. B. Wood

book company in May, 1885. I could find no other mention of the Wood store. Wilmot & Co., as it was called, became Schoff & Miller of later years. Dodge was succeeded by William R. Searing in 1857.

None of these early bookstores were of long duration. Corselius, it seems, was in business longest, but most of them had been displaced in 1860, when the earliest city directory was released. There were then apparently three bookstores. Schoff & Miller operated the first so-called University Book-Store at No. 2 Franklin Block, retailing and wholesaling books and stationery. The Empire Book Store, under the direction of James R. Webster & Co., was located on the south side of Huron Street, opposite the Franklin House, and carried law and medical books in their stock. Andrew De Forest was also listed as engaging in the book trade.

In Chapin's 1868 Ann Arbor City Directory, James R. Corson was a dealer in books at 28 E. Huron. During the intervening years since the preceding directory a book store was started also by Louis B. Gilmore and Isaac R. Fiske, at 4 Gregory Block on North Main Street, the location of the present Wahr's Main Street store. There has thus been a bookstore in this same spot definitely for at least 77 years. Right next door at 3 Gregory Block, John F. Miller & Co. (John F. Miller and Stephen M. Webster) had still another store.

By 1872 John Moore had become the successor to the Miller store at No. 3 Gregory Block. Gilmore & Fiske still remained; while the store at 28 E. Huron was now the J. C. Watson & Co.; and James R. Webster and Andrew De Forest made up the J.R.Webster & Co. at 8 E. Huron. Watson had just about eliminated the book part of his business to concentrate on wall paper and photographic copies.

A rather curious shift in the line-up is revealed in F. H. Pray's Washtenaw County Directory for the years 1878-79. Douglas & Co. (W. W. Douglas) was located at 3 Gregory Block, while John Moore had taken over the spot at No. 4, formerly Gilmore & Fiske. It was about this time (probably before) that my grandfather, George Wahr, the son of an early Washtenaw County immigrant, started his career in the business in which he has been engaged for 70 years. G. L. Moore began one of the first State Street stores on the corner of State and William. Likewise Sheehan & Co. appeared for the first time, having two stores at 13 E. Huron and 28 State Street.

By 1883-84 several new names again appear. Andrews & Witherby (Samuel C. Andrews and George C. Witherby) have opened a book and stationery store at 13 S. Main Street. Both the Moores, G. L. on State and John on Main, still continue. Sheehan & Co. have by now transferred their entire business to 28 S. State and no longer maintain the downtown branch. Boughton Willis is in the post office building and should be considered mostly a stationery dealer and at best a very minor book seller. One more new firm at 8 S. Main is George Osius & Co.

On July 5, 1883, George Osius combined with Charles Ludlow and George Wahr to buy out John Moore and continue as George Osius & Co. at 4 N. Main. The year 1886-87 saw the book business attract Herbert Randall, who had a store at 30 E. Huron, and F. J. Schleede on the corner of Ann and Fourth. The post office shop was in the possession of F. E. Yale, while Andrews and Witherby, Sheehan & Co., and George Osius & Co. continued. It is remarkable that, even with a growing University, a city of Ann Arbor's size at the time could support so many firms.

My grandfather became sole owner of his business by buying out the two partners on January 3, 1887. Wahr's Bookstore dates from that time and is now nearing its sixtieth anniversary.

From then on to the time of the first World War there are several gaps in the history. Andrews & Co. (the heirs in 1889 to Andrews & Witherby), G. L. Moore, F. J. Schleede, and the post office shop all disappeared. Hearsay places Schleede on State Street in the stationery business as late as the time of the first World War. Through the whole period, Sheehan's and Wahr's were the constant factors. Wahr's opened a State Street branch at 310 S. State, where Safell & Bush is now located, in 1892, and moved to the present site of its University Book Store in 1903. Sheehan's remained in the same location where Quarry's is today.

Naturally a few new names appeared. In the 1890's Moore & Taber were advertising books and stationery at 6 Main Street and 44 State Street. In 1894, Martin Schaller opened a new bookstore at 19 E. Washington. He remained in business until about 1903. Moore and Wetmore also existed in the 90's, their whole stock being advertised for sale in 1897.

The years of crisis that immediately preceded the outbreak of World War I saw the founding of several new bookstores in Ann Arbor. The 1912-13 Michigan handbook for University students carries an advertisement for law, medical, and dental books by C. E. Barthell, on the second floor at 326 S. State where Mr. Barthell apparently began business. Myron E. Slater founded Slater's Bookstore about the same time at its present location at 334 S. State. Thomas I. Biddle established himself a little later in 1917, dealing largely with books for the professional schools.

Sheehan's bookstore, a landmark since 1878, changed hands in January, 1918, by its sale by Mrs. John V. Sheehan to Charles Graham. Mr. Graham in 1921 opened a cross-campus branch at East University, where Ulrich's now is. In 1929 this firm was purchased by Marvin Slater. In 1930 he enlarged his store at 334 S. State to a double one, and for a few months operated three stores, after which the original Sheehan store ceased to be a bookstore. Another eventful year was 1934. Slater's cross-campus store was sold to Fred Ulrich, while Myron Slater returned to the book business to open the College Book Shop, which in 1937 became Follett's Book Store. Throughout these turbulent years Wahr's Bookstores continued and were the only link with the past, having maintained more than a half century of unbroken existence. For a few years,

1931-37, Wahr's operated an Old and Rare Book Shop at 306 S.State.

Trends in Distribution

It would seem to me that, apart from the date survey of book stores in Ann Arbor, historians, yes even local historians, would find more significance in what was sold. This knowledge would lead us to a clear picture of various factors in the society of the period. Advertisements, stock books, and just memory are the most reliable fountains of information in this regard.

For the most part popular fiction and non-fiction lists, as we in the book and publishing business know them today, were not as yet an established element. Most of the stores featured school books, with some scientific and religious works. All of them had in stock the standard works of the great literary figures of the day, with a slight preponderance in the field of English literature.

Corselius recommended in 1834 Marshall's Life of Washington, Jefferson's works, an eight-volume set of Byron's poems, the Life of Wickliff, and Crowe's History of France. Other stores in the 1840's suggested a wide variety of school books on arithmetic, grammar, algebra, and geography, while professional works like Hayward's Physiology were making their first appearance. Medical and philosophical books were already common.

It must be remembered that the stock in the so-called book stores was not limited to books. In fact on the contrary, the books themselves often appear to have been the secondary rather than the main line of business. The stores around the time of the Civil War and after, for some unexplained reason, stocked wall paper in addition to books. Schoff & Miller advertised in the Ann Arbor Journal of August 10, 1859, wall paper and window paper, along with Livingston's South Africa and the Life of Aaron Burr, Alexander Hamilton, and Thomas Jefferson. The Life and Thoughts of Henry Ward Beecher was also listed.

In his early years my grandfather too dealt in wall paper. As a general rule he stressed his wall paper activities in the spring of the year. Both his store and Sheehan's held annual holiday sales at Christmas time. Prices at the time were remarkable. A 15-volume set of Dickens' complete works sold for $4.50. The complete Scott works in 12 volumes went for $5.00, while 8 volumes of George Eliot sold for a mere $3.00. A continual best-seller naturally was the Bible in various editions, including imported ones from England.

Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, Lowell, Will Carlton, Browning, Thackery, and Macaulay all came under the heading of standard works. Macaulay's History of England in 5 volumes, with half-calf binding, priced by the publishers at $16.00, sold for $7.00 in Ann Arbor. Numerous volumes were selling for 25¢, 35¢, and 48¢. Juvenile books were a regular department. The Chatterbox series and Harper's Young People were steady favorites.

In the school book department Wahr's at one time distributed a present of a pocket Webster's dictionary or some other item with every purchase of texts and supplies. I found very interesting two old books kept by my grandfather listing the texts used in the University from 1905 to 1911, and the requirements of the Ann Arbor High School from 1900 on to the time of the first World War. These lists illustrate gradual expansion in the scope of the courses offered, as also a decline in certain courses. As for example, Greek grammars and dictionaries were annually mentioned in high school demands; this subject is no longer even taught in any local high school. A careful study of this material could produce an interesting commentary on trends in education.

As we reach the turn of the century a new line in the book business is being taken. It is true that the old standbys like Burns, Coleridge, Goldsmith, Milton, Pope, Moore, Scott, Wordsworth, and Tennyson continue their irresistible march forward. The best sellers of the time were for the most part fiction. When Knighthood was in Flower, A House Boat on the Styx, The Red Badge of Courage, Peck's Bad Boy, Gentleman from Indiana, and Ben Hur were some of the leaders. In the first decade of the twentieth century, fiction at least became more realistic with works like Jack London's Sea Wolf. About 1919, heaviest stocks were being carried of Joseph Conrad and Zane Gray, while Thayer's Life of Roosevelt and The Education of Henry Adams were some of the first non-fiction books to enjoy a real sale. Another ten years later and non-fiction leaders were Benet's John Brown's Body and Lippman's Preface to Morals. By this era and afterwards the great inter-war authors enjoyed heavy sales, a few of which were John Dos Passos, Robert Frost, Theodore Dreiser, James Branch Cabell, Wallace Stegner, Ernest Hemingway, and John Steinbeck.

Other merchandise was sold in many bookstores. Stationery supplanted the wall paper of former times. Fountain pens and office supplies were closely linked. Wahr's was one of the largest dealers in sporting goods in the city.

It is obvious that books have always enjoyed an unusually wide distribution in the Washtenaw County area. The whole state has been good on that score, as a matter of fact. The first advertisement in the Detroit Gazette of 1817 was one for books. Sheldon & Reed were selling the accepted Johnson, Goldsmith, Scott, and Byron

Production Publishing has in no way kept pace with distribution. In the whole State of Michigan there have been few publishers, and here in Ann Arbor only a handful of real ones. The University comes first to mind. It first published under its own imprint in 1846 and regularly after 1850.

The scarcity of publishers is largely due to the general risks and uncertainties of the profession. It requires an astute

literary mind as well as a commercial one to judge the merits of a manuscript and its potential market.

One of the most famous publications to come out of Ann Arbor was Dr.Chase's Receipe Book. This was a general all around household necessity that gave all types of information for everyday use. It sold more than a million and a quarter copies. It was first published by Dr. A. W. Chase, the author. In 1860 the eighth edition was already published in Ann Arbor. Chase bought the Ann Arbor Courier in 1865 and used it for the distribution of his fast growing work. In 1869 the entire publishing business was sold to Rice A. Beal, who went on to publish thousands of copies of the old edition and some 40 editions of a new and enlarged version.

An attempt was made by another firm to publish the Chase book in 1872. Chase himself headed the new company under the name of the Ann Arbor Printing & Publishing Company. It published Dr. Chase's Second Receipe Book. A long court action eventually prevented continuation of this project. Chase left the company, which did publish a very few other titles. The recipe book piled up staggering totals year after year under the Beal firm in Ann Arbor while Chase himself published several new editions in Toledo. As late as 1931, David McKay in Philadelphia marketed the volume.

George Wahr was about the only extensive publisher to be active in Ann Arbor. My grandfather was first attracted by the publishing game in the years 1895-97. He meets all the requirements of the definition of a real publisher. During his lifetime he has published around 250 titles, ranging in all fields from novels and children's books to college textbooks. This, while it may seem small in comparison to the output of firms like the Macmillan Company, is a substantial achievement.

Among our early efforts were Warthin's Pathology, Huber's Histology, Novy's Bacteriology, Bunker's Cases on Suretyship, Watson's Interest Tables, Netto's Algebraic Theories, Dwyer on International Law, and an Ann Arbor Cook Book. Wide national distribution was obtained for such excellent, scholarly works as Glover's Tables, Inskip's Tables, Wagner's Spanish Grammar, Moore-Knott's Elements of Old English, Kenyon's American Pronunciation, and Rich's Physical Laboratory Manual. As a curiosity fact, one of John Dewey's first writings, while here at Michigan, entitled The Study of Ethics - A Syllabus, was published by George Wahr in 1897. It was a regular cloth-bound book.

My grandfather has always been especially proud of some of his historical publications. These include a History of St. Andrew's Church by Cross, and Shaw's History of the University of Michigan. Since 1905 he has also published annually a Michigan Calendar with illustrations of the campus buildings. One of these, in the shape of a football, was distributed by L. E. Marshall in 1900.

Another private publication venture, important from the standpoint of the University and its alumni, was that of the Michigan songbook. This was first published under the title of Michigan's Favorite College Songs in 1913, by Mrs. Minnie Maes Root of this city. There have been approximately 19,000 copies printed. During the depression an abridged edition was compiled to meet demands. The 11th edition is now coming off the presses.

Today most of the book stores do a small amount of publishing as an adjunct to their regular business. One of the most outstanding new developments is the emergence of the Edwards Brothers firm. Specialists in lithoprinting, the company now publishes books under the imprint of J. W. Edwards. In the past year 201 German scientific and technical books have been reprinted by Mr. Edwards. The organization has been in the printing business for 50 years, but the publishing by J. W. Edwards began only last October.

Perhaps an even more revolutionary step was taken here this fall. A non-profit organization, Projected Books, Inc., was formed. Its purpose is to put books into films so that they may be read by disabled veterans who are unable to hold books in their hands. Such a process may hold a great deal for the future.

Books at the present moment are enjoying their greatest boom in history. This is in spite of paper rationing and other restrictions brought on by the war. Thousands of textbooks have been printed for use by the Army and Navy, while the Council on Books in Wartime has issued the Armed Service editions, pocket-size, paper-bound reprints, for free distribution to service men. To increase public interest it has also inaugurated a weekly radio program, Tuesday at 11:30 p.m. over NBC, called Words at War, on which current books of importance are dramatized. A new project of the Council will be Overseas Editions, Inc., which will publish special editions of American books for distribution in liberated countries by the OWI's Overseas Publications Bureau.

One hears a lot of argument about the future of all this activity. There is always raging the dispute between the book seller on one hand and the large publisher on the other, because the latter enters the low-price field and finds new outlets in department stores, drug stores, and even news stands. I disagree with the attitude of many in the trade. It seems to me that the wider distribution should always be our goal if we are to have the best of all possible worlds. I think that the present boom in books will not collapse in the post-war period, and this is equally true in Great Britain where miracles have been accomplished in publishing in the face of severe war losses. A new habit has been created for many people, a habit essential to their understanding of the problems facing us. If we develop the export field, our ideals can be spread to other lands, and who knows, we may then become truly "United Through Books."

Ann Arbor, Michigan
December 15, 1944